

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: VSC Board of Trustees  
FROM: Patricia Moulton, President, Vermont Technical College  
DATE: December 2, 2019  
SUBJECT: Securing the Future of Vermont Technical College

Thank you for the opportunity to update you on the work we are doing at Vermont Tech to “Serve Vermont Students by Securing the Future of the Vermont State Colleges.” We are working to address the challenges outlined in the White Paper prepared by the Long Range Planning Committee addressing the 6 priorities which should ensure:

- Consistent positive operating results
- Sustainable campus configurations with realistic enrollment and revenue projections.
- Increased opportunities for non-traditional students.
- Improved affordability for students.
- Improved retention and graduation rates.
- Increased system collaborations.

Vermont Tech will undergo its 10 year accreditation review by the New England Commission of Higher Education on October 25-28, 2020. These next several months are a critical time for the college to prepare a well done self-study for submission next August. This is the top priority for faculty and staff. Recognizing the importance of this work, some of the work needed to progress on some of these priorities will commence in earnest after the accreditation visit. Having said that, we are progressing very well in a number of areas. Below is a summary of preliminary discussions.

Vermont Tech has established three task forces:

- Facilities
- Academics
- Student Experience/Retention.

These task forces consisting of faculty, staff and students will develop plans to address the challenges and priorities. In addition, we are updating our Strategic Plan and incorporating the work of the Task Forces. Specifically, the following work is underway.

**Consistent positive operating results:**

- ✓ Enrollment:
  - Vermont Tech exceeded fall 2019 projected enrollment targets by 1.7%. We projected a -1% decline and achieved a +.7% or just under 1% increase.
  - Our strategic plan projects a 5% decrease in enrollment by 2023 due to demographics. Annual budget projections will assume decline while our marketing and admissions efforts will continue to grow enrollment.
    - We are bolstered by the recent finding that Vermont Tech ranks #1 in Vermont for ROI!
  - We will continue to project revenues conservatively and expenses liberally using a 0% increase in state appropriations, a 4% increase in salaries and benefits, and a maximum of a 3% tuition increase.

- We are expanding the capacity of our nursing sites in St. Albans, Randolph Center, and Central Vermont and recently in Rutland.
- We will examine opportunities to expand other allied health programs to our distant sites.
- We are working on articulations agreements with certain CTE's.
- Our Strategic Plans calls for increasing our strategic reserves to \$2million by 2023.
- We are seeking to sell certain facilities as described below in an effort to focus on our core competency of education and workforce development.

**Sustainable campus configurations and realistic enrollment projections:**

- ✓ Enrollment: Please see above.
- ✓ Campus configuration:
  - ✓ We are in need of expanding in Williston. The goal is to seek public private partnerships to facilitate expansion on that campus.
    - The following is in process:
      - We will end our lease of commercial space in the 700 building this May and convert that space to a classroom/meeting room.
      - We are working with White and Burke to prepare a conceptual plan and RFP for a public/private partnership to build a new mixed use building on .83 acres we own that fronts on US Route 2.
      - The Chancellor is contracting with White and Burke to conduct an Asset Management Assessment of both the Williston and Randolph Center campuses.
      - We are working to obtain a “right of first offer” with the owners of the Rack Warehouse and Creative Sound buildings located on land we own and lease to them.
      - We are evaluating short and long term residence needs in Williston with an eye toward a possible renovation of the first floor of the 700 building in to dorm rooms. This is a possible private donation and naming opportunity.
  - ✓ We are in need of shrinking our space in Randolph Center. The goal is to sell certain properties and convert others to profit centers for the college.
    - We will commence a Master Planning process for our Randolph Center campus this spring, 2020.
      - Examine long term classroom, lab, office and other space needs.
      - Develop a plan for renovating dorms and consolidating operations. Including evaluating housing needs in Randolph Center for a possible public/private partnership to rehabilitate Old Dorm in to apartments for both student and public rental. As well as possible renovation of a second dorm in to office and conference space.
      - Also included is restructuring plan for the Agriculture program to include a sustainable farm operations plans. To be completed by summer 2020.
    - We are dedicating capital funds for bathroom renovations in Keenan Hall starting in the summer of 2021.
    - We are in the process of selling, leasing or decommissioning the Anaerobic Digester on the Randolph campus. An RFP to interested parties is awaiting final review by the Chancellor's Office.

- We are in the process of selling the Enterprise Center on Route 66 in Randolph. An RFP to realtors is going out shortly.
- We are working on selling the “green house” in Norwich.
- We are working on selling the Norwich Farm. This is delayed by litigation.
- We have closed the nursing site in Springfield.
- We are developing the Vermont Additive Manufacturing Collaborative to expand the capabilities of our manufacturing lab and creating an Additive Manufacturing Center of Excellence at Vermont Tech. Goals include a public/private partnership with manufacturers to obtain graduates educated in additive manufacturing, provide incumbent worker training in additive design and manufacturing and a fee for service opportunity for Vermont Manufacturers to do prototyping and small batch production in our labs.

**Increased opportunities for non-traditional students:**

- ✓ The goal is to open our degree programs to non-traditional students through different modalities, low residency opportunities, decentralizing delivery, telepresence and other opportunities.
  - We are investigating offering degree programs at CTE centers around the state. A preliminary report is due the Legislature December 2019. If feasible, we may pilot up to two programs spring 2021 or fall 2021. The final legislative study including an evaluation of the pilots is due to the Legislature on 1/21.
  - Our strategic plan calls for 5 new programs available for non-traditional students by 2023. This work will begin in earnest post our accreditation visit.
  - We are continuing to grow our Employer Partners through our Continuing Education and Workforce Development Division and with our Degree programs.
  - We are creating a Bachelor Degree in Independent Studies to enable future CTE teachers in our CTTEEP program and apprenticeship participants to obtain degrees. This enhances their earning power. These students are already working adults.
  - Expand apprenticeship opportunities with Vermont Employers.
  - We are developing new cohorts of nurses with specific employers. Including partnerships with hospitals and long term care facilities we teach at the place of work making it accessible for non-traditional students.

**Improved affordability for students:**

- ✓ The goal is to lower the cost of attending Vermont Tech, offering additional assistance and find faster pathways for students.
  - We are using Open Educational Resources now expanding new opportunities each semester.
  - Expanding our employer partners which provide scholarships and paid summer internships.
  - Investigating VEMO financing opportunities for appropriate majors.
  - We have a committee examining scholarships to determine our optimal amount and investigate new opportunities.
  - We are examining residential requirements and options to waive these requirements.
  - We are investigating offering degree programs at CTE centers around the state. A preliminary report is due the Legislature December 2019. If feasible, we may pilot up to two programs spring 2021 or fall 2021. The final legislative study including an evaluation of the pilots is due to the Legislature on 1/21.
  - Explore the option of an accelerated degree program through the development of a three-semester calendar.

- Increase certifications for National Guard members and other military personnel.
- Formalize transfer credits for prior learning of military personnel. Add assessment of prior learning in a more systematic way.
- We are in the process of hiring an Instructional Technologist to work with Faculty to develop new modalities and delivery options.

**Improve retention and graduation rates:**

- ✓ The goal is to retain and graduate as many students as possible. We are working on specific benchmarks.
  - Optimizing orientation for all students including enhancing on-line orientation.
    - Offering “Tech Trek” fall 2020. A 3 day out door experience after the one day orientation and before classes start.
  - Enhance our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion efforts. Discussing a “bias response team” on both campuses.
  - Implementing AVISO. We have a working group in place including early adopters.
  - Research and better understand how other consortium models might support us. Specifically, for students who get off track on their degree pathway.
  - Embed Industry Recognized Credentials in existing degree programs.
  - Examine an expanded “first year” experience for students. Possible 1 credit course.
  - Pursuing a Title III grant to assist with retention work.
  - Examining our transfer process and how we can be more transfer friendly.
  - Evaluating growing athletic programs. We are seeing improved retention rates for athletes.

**Increased system collaborations:**

- ✓ The goal is to partner, when and where possible, with other institutions in the system.
  - Continue to grow collaborations with CCV. More joint workforce development partnerships i.e. CVMC, BMH.
  - Develop articulation agreement with CCV. Including detailed evaluation of real or perceived barriers to transfer of credits. Examine additional pre or co-requisite opportunities.
  - Offer classroom and other space to sister colleges in Randolph Center and as space allows in Williston.
  - Evaluate co-locating with CCV and others where possible.
    - Evaluate a move of the Bennington nursing site to The Mill.
  - Consider a shared CHO for the system.

**Summary:**

Work is still in the early stages. There are additional ideas to what is listed here being discussed at the Task Force meetings. All three Task Forces have met at least once and meet bi-weekly to monthly to make progress. New ideas are being generated. As their work and the work of outside consultant’s progresses, we will keep the LRPC and Board apprised.